

# **Section 6.4a**

## **Title: Draft 1 Tourism**

### **1.Overview**

The authority continually monitors the volume and value of tourism and uses the Scarborough Tourism Economic Activity Monitor (STEAM) to achieve this. The model provides a robust indicative base for monitoring trends based on a monthly and annual basis. It is used by all of the local authorities in Wales and can therefore be used to measure local trends and to measure trends and progress regionally and nationally.

The 2015 report shows that Blaenau Gwent received 675,530 visitors who spent a total of 864,250 days in the area. These visits brought £43.2m into the local economy and supported the full time equivalent of 582 jobs. Since the last Destination Management Plan the area has seen a growth of 7.2% visitors however these visitors have contributed an extra 10.7% into the local economy with an 8.8% increase in those directly employed in tourism.

### **2.Story behind the data**

The rise in staying visitors (9.4%) is higher than day visitors (6.6%). A further analysis of staying visitors shows the number staying with friends and relatives remaining steady but there has been a decline in non-serviced accommodation. Countering this, there has been a large rise in those staying in serviced accommodation with an 85.2% rise in visitor numbers. The data for serviced accommodation show 27,190 visitors spent a total of 52,570 days in the area. These visits brought £7,191,000 into the local economy and directly supported the full time equivalent of 100 jobs.

There is a favourable comparison of Blaenau Gwent's performance over the past 3 years in comparison to the South East Wales region. Expenditure in the accommodation sector has risen by 73.5% locally compared to 26% across the region. Expenditure on food and drink was

8.9% in Blaenau Gwent compared to 9% in S E Wales, recreation 7.2% against 9% regionally. Shopping has only risen by 5.1% compared to 8% regionally and transport 7.6% compared to 9%. The spend by visitors in serviced accommodation has risen by 85.5% locally and 25% across the region, day visitors spent 6.6% more locally but 9% more across the region.

### 3. What we know from engagement



During the Blaenau Gwent We Want Engagement exercise, the partnership undertook and attended numerous engagement activities and events throughout the borough to gather people's views.

Residents also took part via the Blaenau Gwent We Want Facebook page and partnership websites. Links to an online questionnaire were also distributed to many residents known to the partnership, such as members of the Blaenau Gwent Citizen Panel.

Residents were encouraged via the methods above to answer a range of questions that sought to capture:

- Citizen values, aspirations and priorities;
- Citizen needs – insight into the needs they and their communities encounter within daily life and what the best solutions may be and
- Citizen assets – what people can and already contribute themselves such as self-care, citizen and community action and volunteering.

Q1. What do you think is special about BG?

Q2. What things are important to you to live well and enjoy life?

Q3. What would make BG a better place?

Q4. What can you do to help make BG a better place?

Approximately 1,000 residents were engaged with (across all groups) during the engagement phase.

Tourism was specifically mentioned by just a handful of respondents during the engagement programme, who identified our rich heritage, local parks, monuments, beautiful landscape and proximity to the Brecon Beacons National Park as special attractions to the area. However, these respondents did identify a need to regenerate and tidy up the local area, particularly the town centres, in order to attract more tourism in future. Although the majority of respondents made no mention of tourism specifically, our special Environment and Heritage, two of our biggest tourist attractions, were recognised throughout the engagement programme and both featured in the top 5 themes identified when people were asked what was special about Blaenau Gwent; Environment being the number 1 theme.

#### **4. What we know from existing research**

Further work will be undertaken dependant on the direction given by the public service board on priorities following its 21 March 2017 meeting.

#### **5. What this tells us about Well-being in Blaenau Gwent**

We are still building the picture for tourism within Blaenau Gwent and would welcome your views during this period of consultation. We are particularly interested in your thoughts on whether more could be done to promote and support tourism within the borough and whether this might offer more opportunities to develop in more diverse business make up within Blaenau Gwent. We are also interested in hearing of any positive stories you can share about the area but will also like to hear from you if you have experience any accessibility issues in enjoying what the area has to offer.